

agenda

December, 1959.

No. 9.

Poetry Issue

THE SOLITUDES. No. 6.

There was no part of you
my hands did not know.
Now separated,
let the memory of my hands
Enfold your neck, your breasts, your thighs,
gently as petals fall
or the wings of butterflies rise.

Be like a chrysalis contained by my fingers, encased by
my touch:

Let the rude world stare at this robe you wear
 Dior could not copy it
 Paquin imitate it;
 Go dressed in my hands, my desire the designer
 Clothed in this passion
 You are the height of fashion.

So flaunt the memory of my hands proudly
Till this blind glove with which I now write
Can undress you, and from your nakedness
Receive its flesh, its purpose and its sight,
Embroidering your skin in the fierce tattoo of night.

RONALD DUNCAN

FABLE

A thorn bush near a canal
had two foxgloves growing beneath it.

The old thorn was immensely proud of the pretty flowers,
And they were sometimes grateful to it for the shelter it lent
them.

When the wind blew, it leant over them;
When the sun shone, it shaded them;
It had branches enough for both and had grown them for that purpose.

But each foxglove thought it alone should be sheltered or
shaded.

At first the old thorn didn't listen to these requests
But cherished both flowers because they were flowers;
And it is the nature of a thorn bush to cherish.

But one night when the wind blew;
One of the foxgloves bullied the thorn to bend all its branches
over her

Promising all her love if he would not divide his shelter.
Reluctantly the tree did as she wished:

Instantly its leaves drooped with remorse.

The next morning, the other foxglove lay broken by the wind.
"You promised me love" the thorn tree said "you've given
only grief".

"I am miserable too," replied the flower, "It's all your fault.
You should have remembered you were a thorn tree,
and not let me persuade you into behaving like an umbrella."

RONALD DUNCAN

BLAST

*Curse those who will hang over this
Manifesto with silly canines exposed*

We need again 'Old Wyndham's' BLAST
A bulwark raised against the swarm
A voice raised up against

CONFORM CONFORM CONFORM

In short, a difficult bastard
(not the ordinary run of 'em)

Whose verse not only won't fit in a five foot line
but, by design,

Kicks the pants off

EVERY BLOODY ONE OF 'EM.

NOEL STOCK

SNAILS IN MARCH—LEBANON

O crudelis amor...

Now the snailers with their lamp
Nightly scour the rocky ramp
Following iridescent trails
Of night-feeding table snails.

Regularly from the stone
To the wicker basket thrown
Snails fall, trapped by bird-eyed boys,
With a bouncing cracking noise.

Each one from the lily torn
Fatuously unfurls his horn
To receding pasturage,
Bubbling green with shock and rage.

While the lurid hurricane
Flickers through the plaited cane
Stonily the fat snails climb,
Racing against boiling time.

*—O my love, my hornèd love,
Comrade of the lily grove,
Did you tire of lily-fare
So to vanish into air?*

*—Did it cloy, our humble taste
For lily beer and almond paste,
That by such mercurial flight
You flee me on our wedding night?*

*—Could the almond petal not
Suffice your tooth? Abhorrent lot
That lonely I must haunt the grove
Condemned to mourn a faithless love!*

Thus a voice as soft as fall
Of almond petal on dry-stone wall
Arraigned the injustice of the world.

And still illusion round her whirled
In spirals like her whorlèd shell.

The storm-light on the lilies fell.

Oblivious on her rainbow trail
Crept to her pyre the Dido snail.

ALAN NEAME

DINING OUT

In the country snow last night we joined the horde
Of diners-out;

(Bali' against the wall.)

"You've come! How good you are! You know us all. . ."

Motionless beneath the menacing sword

We wait the revelation of the word;

The talk is small, the accent trivial:

"Beryl, I hear, has done one on Nepal."

The golden firelight lights the shrunken board.

Bawd! Your chemistry is intellectual:
 What man is there of English social life
 Could hope to reach Asoka's hundredth wife?
 What *sakta* bride of 'obscene' ritual?
 What shaven loins does that coarse Harris hide?
 Who wears the grave sarong,—that does not 'ride'?

PETER WHIGHAM

The above poem has since appeared in Mr Denis Goacher and Mr Whigham's recent volume *Clear Lake Comes from Enjoyment* published by Neville Spearman at 9/6d.

XI.

Furius, Aurelius, friends of my youth,
 whether I land up in the Far East,
 where the long drawn roll of the Indian Ocean
 thumps on the beach,
 or whether I find myself surrounded by Hyrcanians,
 the supple Arabs, Sacians, Parthian bowmen,
 or in the land where the seven-tongued Nile
 colours the middle sea,
 whether I scale the pinnacles of the Alps
 viewing the monuments of Caesar triumphant,—
 the Rhine, the outlandish seas of
 the ultimate britons,
 whatever fate has in store for me,
 equally ready for anything,
 I send Lesbia this valediction,
 —succinctly discourteous:
 live with your three hundred lovers
 open your legs to them all (simultaneously)
 lovelessly dragging the guts out of each of them
 each time you do it,
 blind to the love that I had for you
 once, and that you (tart) wantonly crushed
 as the passing plough-blade slashes the flower
 at the field's edge.

from *Catullus*.

PETER WHIGHAM

MONUMENT

Sir Blank looks down, the populace
 Looks up; each action corresponds:
 His eyes, a non-committal stare
 Are lifelike in their tarnished bronze.

NOEL STOCK

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 in U.S.A. \$1. " "

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